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ABSTRACT

An outline is presented of a contingency plan for developing sound classroom management practices. The plan revolves around a conceptual model of the different maturity levels of each individual staff member in relation to their classroom management skills. In the model, a group of peer observers monitors the progress of those staff members whose classroom management skills have been diagnosed as falling in the lowest maturity levels. The most able classroom managers become observers and/or workshop facilitators in the program. Training involves observing mature, more capable teachers, attending workshops and seminars, and/or viewing video tapes of successful classroom managers. Once the training cycle is complete, the staff member is observed by a coaching team in the classroom. The second training cycle is also followed by a subsequent series of classroom observations and coaching. The principal's role is to initiate the pre-condition stage of the model (classifying staff maturity levels and selecting specific management techniques to be taught), and to train high maturity level teachers as instructors and observers. (JD)

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# A CONTINGENCY MODEL FOR IMPLEMENTING A CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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## INTRODUCTION

Nine of the last ten Gallup polls found that the public views one aspect of classroom management, discipline, as the number one problem in public education (Levit, 1983). Recent studies report that effective schools are characterized, however, by good classroom management (Doyle, 1980). Consequently, school administrators often pinpoint classroom management deficiencies in their staff.

Even though effective classroom management is central to effective teaching, unfortunately few teacher education programs systematically instruct their students in how to manage classrooms effectively. Until teacher education programs begin to teach the necessary classroom management skills, the burden for training teachers with deficiencies in classroom management will remain with the school districts. The ultimate responsibility for the classroom management skills of the instructional staff rests with the principal.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a contingency plan for developing sound classroom management practices. The plan revolves around a conceptual model of the different maturity levels of each individual staff member in relation to their classroom management skills. It is assumed that decisions about the classroom management plan and its parts are made prior to entry into the model. In this way the model remains flexible for use with a variety of classroom management plans and strategies.

## PROBLEM PRESENTATION

While discussing clinical supervision with a principal recently, I asked the question, 'What is the biggest problem that you face as a supervisor?' He answered by describing one of his teacher's classroom management problems. The teacher was in her first year. Even though her credentials were good, she was having serious problems 'handling youngsters.' She reported that she had not been taught how to discipline seventh-graders in her college program. According to the principal, this teacher's problems are not unique in his school.

The principal needs assistance in developing a classroom management program that will help train teachers. Typically, classroom management skills of the staff vary greatly. Some teachers are outstanding classroom managers, while others are inadequate. Still others need only refinements in specific areas to become capable classroom managers. Because of the wide variance in teacher abilities, the school classroom management program needs to be responsive to the situational needs of each staff member.

## A MODEL FOR CONTINGENCY SUPERVISION

The concept of "maturity levels" is useful in understanding varying leader responses. Successful managers do not treat their staff equal in all situations since the abilities (maturity levels) of the staff are not equal.

For example, if three clerks at a store are not sufficiently trained to inventory supplies properly, then only the three clerks need to be trained prior to engaging in inventory responsibilities. It would be pointless to expect the entire staff to go through inventory training because of the immaturity of three clerks. Similarly, if some teachers need to plan lessons more effectively while others need to improve time-on-task, then these situations should be addressed separately and individually.

The following model (see Figure 1) depicts a classroom management program based upon existing levels of teacher skill. The model illustrates the variability of the staff in a school with regard to maturity levels labelled M-1 to M-4. The concept of the model presented here revolves around the basic contingency leadership model developed by Hersey and Blanchard.

[Figure 1 here]

In the Hersey and Blanchard model, the maturity level of the followers vary and therefore the leadership style must vary accordingly (1982). The most immature members of an organization (M-1) must be told by the supervisor what to do and how to do it. The next level of maturity (M-2) calls for selling the task or program; the third level of maturity (M-3) calls for participation of the staff; and the highest level of maturity (M-4) calls for delegating responsibility to the staff members. All four levels of maturity are described in the contingency model

for implementing a classroom management program. At each maturity level a different plan of action is diagrammed for the staff members at that level. Before examining the different aspects of the contingency model however, it would be useful to discuss the pre-conditions that the administration and staff need to resolve before utilizing the model.

## PRE-CONDITIONS

Classroom management encompasses many dimensions of classroom activity. Classroom management schemes of recent years have included:

*assertive discipline
*behavior modification
*contingency contracting
*management by objectives (MBO)
*time-on-task
*team lesson planning
*grouping
*individualized instruction
*instructional theory into practice (ITIP)

In this paper it is assumed that after a classroom management strategy is selected, the school staff then identifies behaviors which demonstarte relative maturity levels. For example, if the staff chooses to improve time-on-task as a classroom management strategy, the maturity level of the individual teachers must be measured in relation to the actual time-on-task spent in their classroom. The time-on-task measurement can only be obtained by classroom observations.

Classroom observation enables the principal to

classify each staff member's maturity level in relation to the classroom management strategy. The low maturity (M-1) and high maturity (M-4) teachers are easiest to identify. The mid-maturity teachers (M-2, M-3) require more indepth diagnoses. A closer look at each maturity level will reveal the appropriate strategies for improving the classroom management skills of the staff.

The most able classroom managers become observers and/or workshop facilitators in implementing the classroom management strategy. The M-4s may require training as a first step in their role as peer coach. But the use of peers as supervisors has many beneficial side effects.

Coaching teams within the school can be established that work with the less mature teachers on a long term basis. Trust and support, as well as technical feedback, are easier to accept from a peer rather than from an administrator. Also, teacher participation in the program helps legitimize the program in the minds of the staff.

From the ranks of the M-4 staff members, a program management team is formed to oversee the operation of the observation teams and implement the necessary workshops, seminars and inservice. The increased responsibility and participative decision making of this group helps ease the workload on overtaxed administrators and helps build the necessary trust.

Staff members categorized in the lowest maturity level enter all training dimensions of the classroom management plan. This involves observing mature, more capable

teachers, attending workshops and seminars; and/or, viewing video tapes of successful classroom managers. Once the training cycle is complete, the staff member is then observed by a coaching team in the classroom.

Some M-1 teachers might be ready for re-evaluation into a higher maturity group after one training session. However, the majority of low-maturity staff members need additional follow-up instruction and refinement based on their new skill levels.

The second training cycle is followed by a subsequent series of classroom observations and coaching. With each training cycle, the goal of the coaching team is to increase the maturity level of the teacher, and to build rapport and understanding through a series of conferences. Most of the conferences occur prior to and following the classroom observations, thus giving the observation team a chance to coach the learner before and after each performance. In this way the low maturity teacher can examine her/his own performance and compare notes with her/his peers. The training model described for M-1 teachers closely parallels the clinical supervision cycle as developed by Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski (1980).

Those staff members that are diagnosed at maturity level M-2 are placed by their observation team into several selected topics in the classroom management program. They may not need to take part in all of the program's topics if they demonstrate a proficiency in any of the different parts of the program. An M-2 teacher might not need much help with lesson planning as a classroom manage-

ment tool, however implementing their plans and keeping the students on task pose a problem for the teacher. Instead of wasting this teacher's time by forcing her to attend a lesson planning workshop, the observation team concentrates on the weak areas of lesson implementation and time-on-task strategies.

Like the M-1s, some M-2s might be ready for immediate re-evaluation following the first classroom observation, and some may need further fine tuning prior to moving up in maturity level.

Staff members that do not quite attain M-4 status may need to fine-tune their classroom management skills. Once again, only those areas of need are the focus of the observation team. Teachers that fit this category should be able to move into the M-4 category and join an observation team as observers themselves once they've completed their own fine tuning.

Using the time-on-task example, an M-3 teacher is encouraged to examine her/his teaching to find ways to improve the time-on-task in her/his classroom. This process of self-evaluation indicates a readiness on the part of the M-3 teacher to move up to the M-4 maturity level.

## MODEL RAMIFICATIONS

According to O'Hanlon (1983), Theory Z in school administration is not only possible but is likely to improve

the school climate as well. The contingency model described above will help improve the school's overall climate by exhibiting many of the major characteristics of the Theory Z system of management. Five of the basic tenets of Theory Z are:

- commitment to an overall philosophy
- emphasis on the long term
- trust
- subtlety
- participative decision making

The commitment to an overall philosophy and the emphasis on long term effects must be established before the initial observations. Trust, subtlety and participative decision-making are assumed in the classroom management model. The more participative the program eventually becomes, the more trust and subtlety is likely to increase.

School climate is further enhanced by the motivational dimensions inherent in the model. In a review of Herzberg's research on motivation, Silver (1982) found that the aspects of work that are intrinsic to the tasks themselves are significantly related to individual's attitudes and to their levels of motivation. Educational leaders can influence the sense of achievement, recognition, challenge, responsibility, advancement and growth opportunities for teachers.

Research by Herzberg (1966) showed that good feelings associated with responsibility lasted twice as long as any other motivator identified. Attainment of responsibility as an instructor, observer or ultimately management team member are realistic components of the contingency model for implementing a classroom management

program. As the staff becomes increasingly mature, more responsibility is available for the motivation seeker.

Research on staff development programs which combine with aspects of clinical supervision have been shown to be successful. Joyce and Showers (1982) listed four conditions for utilizing peer coaching when working on skill development in teachers. The conditions are:

- °study of the theoretical basis or rationale
- °observation of demonstration of the skill
- °practice and feedback in protected conditions
- °peer coaching while working on the new model

All four of Joyce and Showers' conditions appear in the contingency model. The staff studies and selects a classroom management plan. Observation is part of the instructional strategy of the model. Practice and feedback occurs in a non-threatening manner through peer coaching so that teachers feel safe to share and improve.

Peer observation is also critical to the success of the most effective inservice models researched by Mohlman, Kierstad and Gundlach (1982). Sharing is another key to successful inservice programs. Both sharing and practicality are built into the contingency model for implementing a classroom management program.

The research of Wilsey and Killion (1982) supports situational supervision as the most effective form of staff development. Clinical, situational supervision provides follow-up support with on-site supervision. Research from effective schools supports the concept of staff training on a school-wide basis, and control by the staff over instructional and training decisions.

The principal's role as head coach is to initiate the pre-condition stage of the model and to train M-4 level teachers as instructors and observers. The principal and assistant principal organize and direct initial observations. As the staff proceeds through the model, the principal's active role in the model diminishes, especially as more and more teachers achieve M-4 maturity. Once a sufficient cadre of M-4 observation team leaders are developed, the program management team is established. The program management team assumes responsibility for training new teachers or teachers at lower levels of maturity and maintains the follow-up activities and workshops.

## TIME LINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of a classroom management plan is easier in some schools than others. Schools in which it is customary for the principal to visit classrooms often will adapt to the program easily. Schools in which the principal is rarely seen outside of the office will have difficulty adjusting to frequent observations and collaborative sharing of ideas.

In Figure 2 a proposed timeline for implementing the classroom management contingency model, and the overall classroom management program, is diagrammed.

[Figure 2 here]

The timeline illustrates continuity of program imple-

mentation. Program evaluation is built into the sequence so that modification can be made in the program. If, for example, a school is interested in implementing an assertive discipline program into its classroom management scheme, and then the staff decides to focus on other classroom management models after a couple of years, the modification/pre-conditions time is available to make the necessary alterations.

## SUMMARY

The contingency model presented is based on the Situational Leadership theory. After the teachers' maturity levels have been diagnosed, the staff proceeds through the plan at their appropriate maturity level.

Those teachers at maturity level M-4 are encouraged to become instructors, workshop leaders and observers. Members of the observation teams consist of peers that have reached the M-4 maturity level. Once a capable group of observation team leaders is trained and developed in the school, a program management team is formed to best utilize the talents of the team leaders. The management team operates the model in ensuing years, thus freeing the principal from much of the workload involved in the day to day operation of the program.

The model provides opportunities for peer coaching. With its many pre- and post-observational conferences and with an on-site peer observation team, the continual

clinical supervision aspect of the model is one of its strongest features.

The principal's role is to act as initiator, observer and supervisor at the outset. He/she is expected to alleviate any administrative difficulties that might diminish the effectiveness of the model.

Effective schools research shows that schools in which good classroom managers operate are generally more effective. Research also shows that effective schools are places where collaborative efforts among the staff are prevalent. The contingency model for implementing classroom management skills in the schools was designed to function within a collaborative work culture. With an emphasis on collaboration and peer participation, the contingency model for implementing a classroom management system is designed for increasing the effectiveness of schools.

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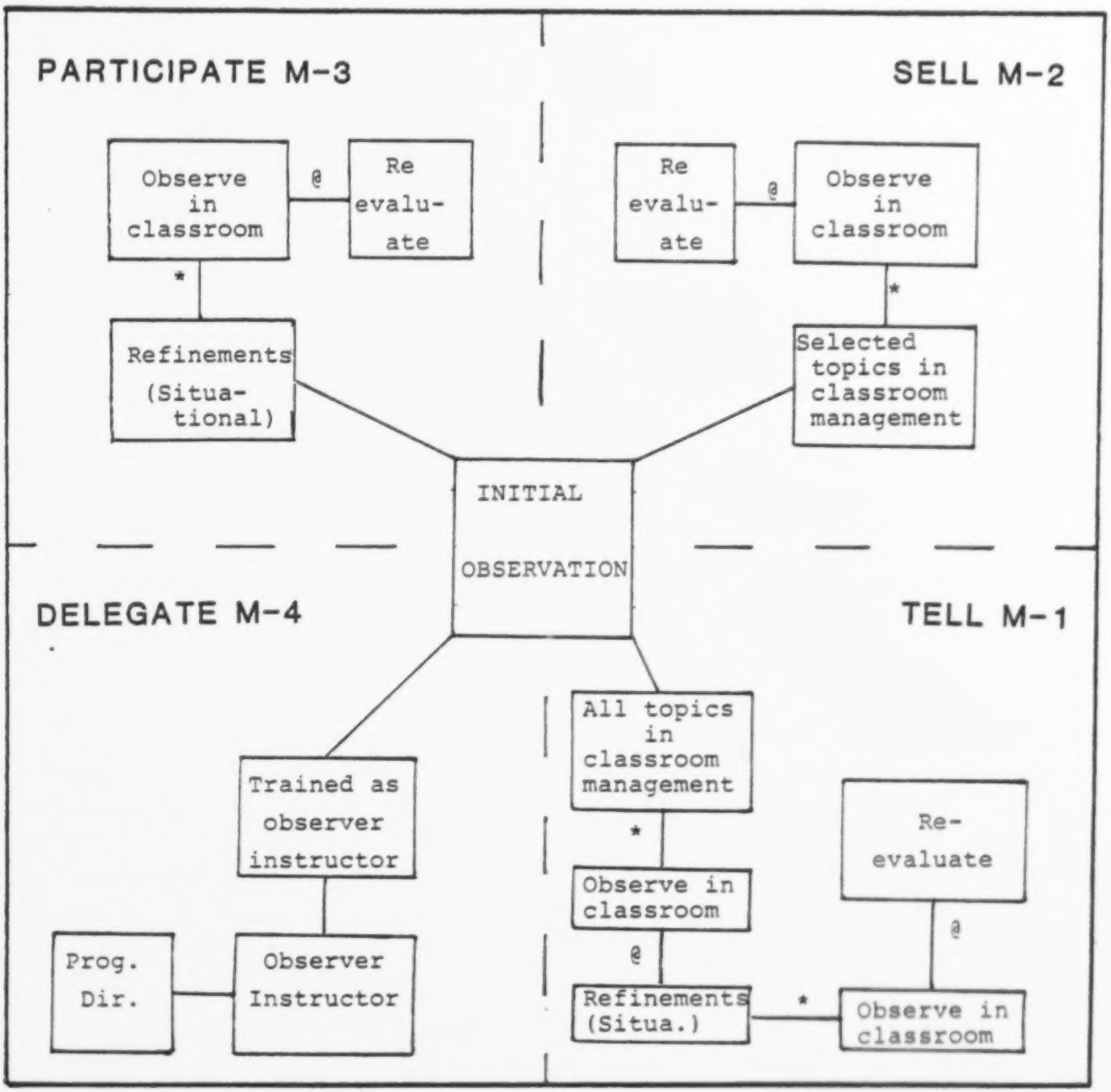
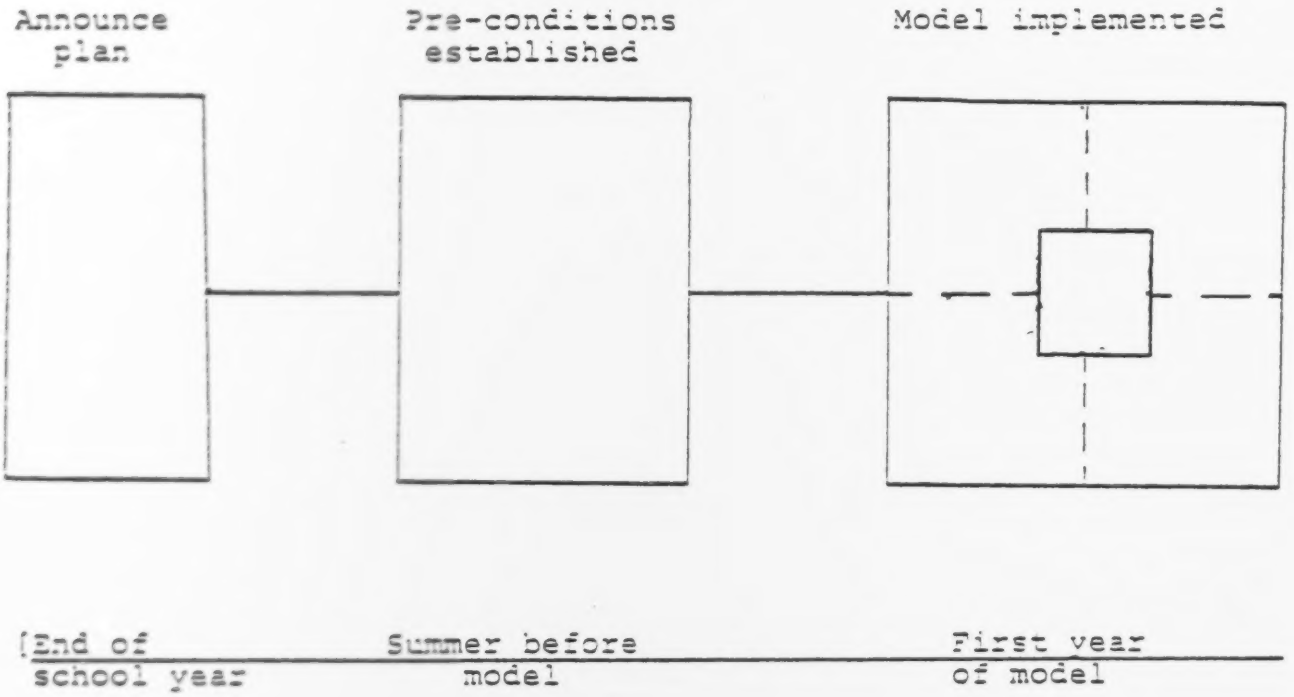



NOTE: * Pre-conference @ Post-conference

# THE CONTINGENCY MODEL

Figure 1

# Timeline for Model Implementation



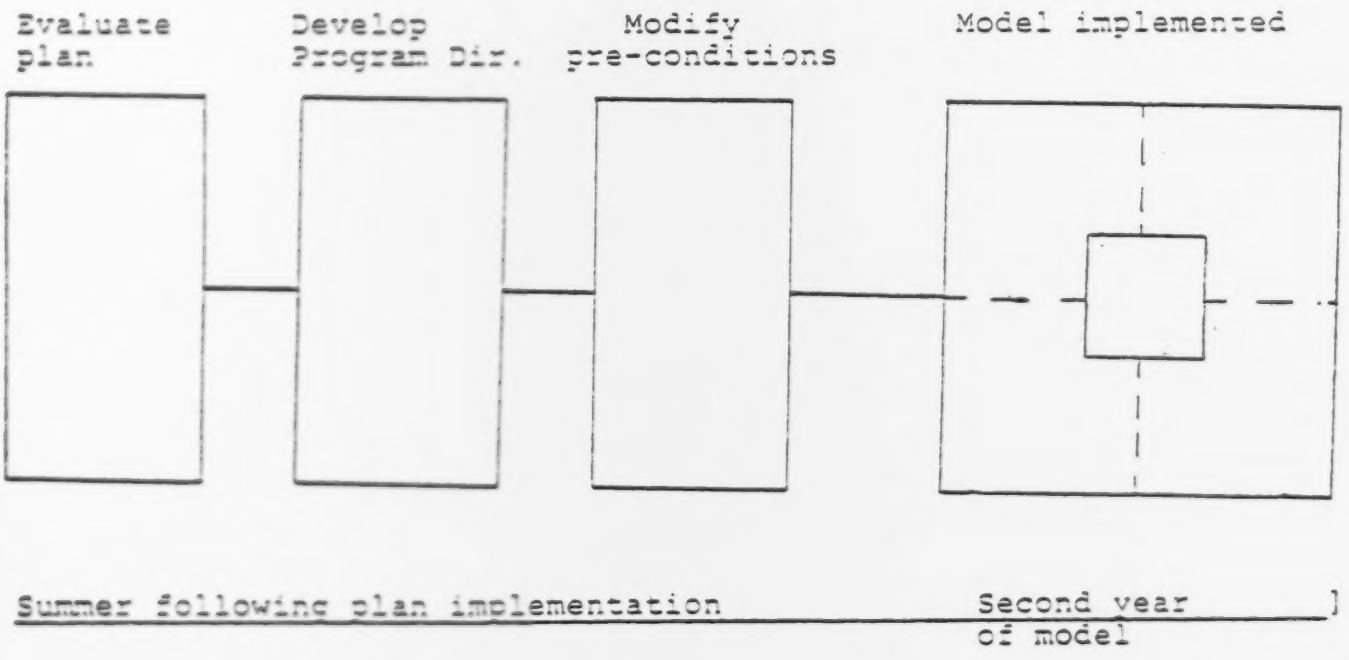






Figure 2

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